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Moments of Freedom: Revolutionary Art from China, South Africa and Tunisia

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Moments of Freedom

REVOLUTIONARY ART FROM CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA
AND TUNISIA

AN HONORS THESIS PRESENTED BY

Ikram Lakhdhar

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For Honors in the Major Field

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

New London, Connecticut

May 2013

// TABLE OF CONTENTS //

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

PREFACE

ART&POLITICS

Literature Review.....p8

THE LEGACY OF THE NEW WORLD

Art Process 1

On Propaganda Artp12

The Authority of the Image in China.....p 14

Art Process 2

On Political Artp16

South Africa's Unresolved Violence.....p19

TUNISIA'S CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC UPHEAVAL

Inefficient Art System.....p26

Public Contestation in the form of urban ornamentationp28

Moments of Freedom Exhibition.....p32

Curatorial Statement.....p36

IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF THE TUNISIAN REVOLUTION

Art Process 3

Looking Beyond the Canon	p38
The Hypocrisy of Resistance: Beauty, Freedom, Truth.....	p41

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Epilogue.....	p45
Index.....	p47
Bibliography.....	p52

ADDENDUM

Images.....	p55
Index.....	p70

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DEDICATION

To my dear family and future children

To my friends and the people that have touched my heart

To being towards Love

PREFACE

I am curious to unravel the source of knowledge about the structure of human existence in the contemporary world. My academic motivation is to drive an innovation in the analysis of the relationship between ‘human nature’ and ‘order’. I am assuming that the -space in between- is absolute freedom.

Through my Honors Thesis exhibition project, I am providing neutral space to initiate a critical conversation about the ideals of an ‘Aesthetic Democracy’ to redefine shared governance in a new era. The narrative of progress of developing states in the global order such as China, South Africa and Tunisia has been framed by neo-colonial critique. The legacy of their complex past mirrors the challenge of their future. A comparative analysis of the context of the aesthetic production of Revolutionary Art provides insight on how to think *freely*.

Jozi x Jo'burg - Johannesburg

MOMENTS OF FREEDOM
**REVOLUTIONARY ART FROM CHINA,
SOUTH AFRICA AND TUNISIA**

For my
EVER...
LEAN WAL
Jozi

APRIL 1 - MAY 15
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ART EXHIBITION CURATED
BY IKRAM LAKHDAR

ORIGINAL IMAGES BY NJABULO SENZO SHABANGU

Literature Review

Since the early emergence of key art historical concepts such as Political art, propaganda art, art of the revolution, art of the war, art of protest, resistance art, and street art, the popular perspective has been concerned with describing this kind of art as either an artistic reaction to political turmoil, or as an artistic action for social change. However, both of these definitions position art as inferior in the hierarchy of the power of authority. Especially when the contemporary artistic production is pegged to the high demand for Kitsch and ornamental decorative ‘art’. Moreover, when artists start making explicit criticism of a certain political regime or leader, they are censored, persecuted, exiled, or driven to the margins of society based on the premise that their actions are serious threats to the ‘national’ interest of society. In consequence, the art exposed, consumed and celebrated by the public is inherently *unfree*.

Karl Marx contributed tremendously to the development of Art theory. In his anthology, Marx declared “the end of art” as a phenomenon that shaped the relation of art to the society. He claimed that art has become the by-product of the economic and political infrastructure of the society, and not in any way involved in the making of it. In a commentary about Marxist theology concerning art, Werckmeister (1973) states, “The essential quality of art appears to be sacrificed to its religious function, which in turn is nothing but a means for kings

and priests to maintain authority over their people...the young Marx must have thought that such a relationship contradicts the basic definition of art, which for him meant the undistorted revelation of true human nature.”¹ For Marx, Art’s role is to reveal human nature. Knowing that humans are social animals and that we are very complex creatures, this task seems to be an essential one for the wellness of the society.

Jaques Ranciere² has characterized genuine politics and artistic activities as separate realities, *Dissensus*, which always involve forms of innovation that tear bodies from their assigned places and free speech and expression from all reduction to functionality. On the other hand, Murray Edelman¹ argues that political ideas, language, and actions cannot help but be based on the images and narratives we take from literature, paintings, film, television, and other genres. Edelman believes art provides us with models, scenarios, narratives, and images we draw upon in order to make sense of political events, and he explores the different ways art can shape political perceptions and actions to promote. Throughout, he maintains, “art should be recognized as a major and integral part of the transaction that engenders political behavior”³ He goes on, “together art and the mind and the situations in which they are applied construct and transform beliefs about the social world, defining problems and solutions, hopes and fears, the past, the present and the future.”⁴ In addition to defining art as essential to politics in the process of transforming societal perception of politics,

¹ Werckmeister, (1973)

² The Chair of Aesthetics and Politics from 1990 until his retirement in the University of Paris VIII, France.

³Edelman, (p2)

⁴ Edelman, (p3)

he delineates the factor that separates their specific role. He claims that while art embodies absolute freedom, politics define restraints as freedom.⁵

Delineating how freedom is configured according to art and to politics is essential in understanding how art and politics relate to each other. In fact, philosopher Immanuel Kant establishes that the most effective regime is that which allows the public to reason *freely*. Kant confirms that, “once people grow more accustomed to thinking for themselves, even governments will respond to “the propensity and calling to *think* freely.”⁶

This literature review reveals the nuanced relationship between art and politics. Essentially, art alongside with politics are defining actors in the regulation of human existence. But most importantly, art acts as the source of knowledge about human nature, while politics defines the ‘appropriate’ knowledge.

Consequently, when the political regime is disrupted and the norms of regulations are blurred and chaotic, what are the limitations of producing political art? And what is the artist responsibility as an engaged citizen? Is it ever possible to divorce art from politics? Whilst the cacophony of freedom and political debate, could an art movement achieve identity re-construction and create a constitution that is adequate for the nation? How can painting as a form of artistic expression become a way for intelligent public consumption without falling in the trap of either becoming mainstream, or cast away as politically institutions?

⁵ Edelman, (p146)

⁶ Werckmeister, (1973)

On Propaganda Art

One of the hallmarks of the Chinese Cultural Revolution was that art acquired a high status in the society. Chairman Mao Zedong used the power of images to frame ideas in an effective way to propagate his ideology and to coerce the population into a certain lifestyle. In this frame of analysis, it becomes critical to lay down the connotations of propaganda art, its definition and its history to understand its effect. Propaganda art is a visual movement that portrays a certain ideology in the context of images that are catered to shape the public towards believing and acting upon that certain ideology. Its factors constitute mass production usually using the art medium that is most accessible, economically affordable and can be easily reproduced to propagate as many images as possible.

The content of the image is another important distinction since it only portrays political messages, framing ideas in a simple and effective way or playing on the public's personal affects such as evoking danger, threat by the enemy or love and affection for the almighty Mao. Also, propaganda poster images have to be painted in a striking visual form, such as the use of bold and contrasting colors, red, black and white.

Interestingly, all propaganda art images from different movements share similar figures and archetypes. This is apparent with using the clenched fist upward gesture, angry mobs or soldiers in uniforms and oversized letters. From these movements, we can mention the posters used in the anti-apartheid black consciousness movement in the 80's, the feminist movement in the U.S in the 50's and currently even Occupy Wall Street movement last year.

The Cultural Revolution marked a shift in aesthetic value for the official Chinese artists and for the public. The definition of art itself was framed by political and ideological purposes. This visual representation of Chinese history through posters is challenged to be pure political propaganda and a false representation of the reality of the Chinese socio-political conditions at the time, and therefore it should not be considered Art.

A critical aspect of propaganda art as well is the time and space which create the context that renders these posters most significant and gives them powerful meaning in the public's eyes. In other words, Mao arranged posters to be produced with specific messages that coincide major political party events, rallies or conferences. In current Tunisia, a new law should be passed as to not invade the public space with any kind of party affiliated political propaganda.

In China, the relationship between arts and politics holds many contradictions. The Chinese government has used art as a tool to consolidate the implementation of its political agenda. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Chairman Mao used the power of images as a powerful tool for propaganda. The only allowed 'people' to exist in China were Mao's 'people'. Mao's propaganda consisted of selling fake happiness and hope to his 'people' for a better life under his rule in the form of traditional Chinese calendars, glorified with heavenly icons. As Kuiyi Shen confirms, "In the later years of the movement, the many artificial images of the model workers, peasants, and soldiers helped indoctrinate the people in their proper roles in Maoist society."⁷

⁷ Propaganda Posters and Art During the Cultural Revolution, Kuiyi Shen

The Authority of the Image in China

Artistic freedom in China is an oxymoron. Chinese twentieth century history shows the extent to which the government has directly and indirectly shaped the production of art and culture. The events of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the 1989 Democracy Movement tragedy and the opening of the market economy significantly altered the national as well as the global perception of China's artistic freedom and its cultural identity.

Zhang Hongtu was born into a traditional Chinese Muslim family in 1943 in northwestern Gansu province. When Mao's atheist regime took shape, he was casted off as a minority and a rightist because of his family's religious background. This also meant that Zhang was excluded from the Red Guards and from painting portraits of Chairman Mao, which was considered a privilege and a predicament for being a good artist. At a young age, Zhang was enthusiastic about Mao's revolution and wanted to be part of it, until he realized later its role in causing civil war. During his years in China, he saw a student getting beaten up because he was accidentally sitting on Mao's image in a newspaper. "Zhang," then, "learned the true power of religious imagery."⁸

Above all, Zhang understood a central dilemma of modern Chinese culture: defining the appropriate limits of authority. Realizing the authority of the image in China, Hongtu used Mao's once glorified persona during the Cultural Revolution as an icon to make satirical critique about his daunting legacy. A view

⁸ Interview with the Artist, October, 2012

of *Material Mao* exhibited at the Bronx Museum of Arts, 1955 confirms that repeating the same image over and over again has a therapeutic effect since repetition dilutes its negative effect and at the same time empowering since repetition creates momentum. He says in an interview, “after I was cured, in a sense, it became meaningless for me to keep doing it.” By transforming Mao’s image and alienating its meaning, the legacy of its past trauma can be healed.

Zhang Hongtu’s iconic art allows the viewer to relate to his ‘sovereign’ outcry for freedom. This need for freedom is eschewed from a desire to cater to preconceived notions of beauty that shape the common taste.

On Political Art

While exploring the intersection between art and politics, I could not find a better example than the South African case. In post-Apartheid South Africa in the last decade and a half, museum and gallery exhibitions of South African art have made clear the value of the visual arts. The South African government has formulated a policy to construct public national museums on lands with historical significance for Apartheid as a means of confronting the past, facilitating reconciliation and fostering democracy in South Africa.

Artists as varied as Alexander Jane, Zwelethu Mthethwa⁹, Diane Victor, and William Kentridge, each of whose work casts light on the multifaceted concerns of South Africa. Their body of work, which includes pieces that present a vision of the indignities and atrocities suffered during Apartheid, challenges both the citizens and authorities of South Africa to confront and exorcize the past.

Specifically, Diane Victor's work addresses the socio-political inequalities and mechanisms of power that exist within South Africa and across the globe. Using inherently fugitive media such as smoke and ash as tools for drawing, the works in this exhibition addresses universal issues of corruption, violence and human frailty."¹⁰ Even though political art is deemed prominent in 'facilitating' the democratization process, its effect to actually engender social justice between the blacks and the whites in South Africa is still under scrutiny.

⁹ Studio 360 website, "New culture for a new South Africa."

¹⁰ *Burning the Candle at Both Ends* was published by David Krut Publishing on the occasion of Victor's recent exhibition at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery

In his chapter on *Paradoxes of political Art*, Jacques Ranciere dissects,

*Art is presumed to be effective politically because it displays the marks of domination, or parodies mainstream icons, or even because it leaves the spaces reserved for it and becomes a social practice. Despite a century of critique-or so-called- directed at the mimetic tradition, it appears to be still firmly entrenched, including in forms of supposed political and artistic subversion. Underlying these forms is the assumption that art compels us to revolt when it shows us revolting things, that it mobilizes, when it itself is taken outside of the workshop or museum and that it incites us to oppose the system of domination by denouncing its own participation in that system.*¹¹

Similarly, in her book *Art+Revolution*, Diane Wylie explores the life of political activist and artist Thami Mneyele bringing to the forefront the challenge that artists face when living in a politically unjust society. Artists are faced with the life-changing question to either commit to politics or to completely isolate and rebel against any real systems. Thami Mneyele's life provides a concrete case of how an artist deployed his artistic creations as a tool for political change. Diane Wylie ultimately argues that Thami's passion and desire to bring about change wasn't accomplished because he intentionally limited his creative psyche and constrained his artistic freedom.

“Thami's life tells the story of someone who became a captive of the logic of sacrifice: accepting constraints on imagination, submerging personal need in the collective ideal, acting without knowing how time would wrap his sacrifice. Wanting to inspire a socialist cultural revolution in a world that was not ripe for it, he was locked into refuting the dominant culture, without the means to create a new one. It proved dangerous and, in the end, futile to draw political and artistic models from elsewhere, especially when advanced consumer society was grinding its way across the cultural landscape as inexorably as a tank.”

¹¹ Ranciere, p 135

While the life of Thami Mneyle is a story of an artist's honorable struggle and self-sacrifice, he has failed to be true to his creative process away from the blasphemy of politics. His self-alternation would have created a model for revelation of truth as well as a solid ground for enlightenment and a peaceful transformation.

Today, even fifteen years after the end of the apartheid, the Legacy of trauma from the horrors of many years of racial divide is still rampant in the South African society. Violence between the blacks and the whites is still embedded in the everyday culture. This is because South Africans were never able to move beyond the haunting effect of the social implementation of the ideology that special segregation was legitimate based on racial superiority of the white. South Africa's culture is stained with the debate of who is the victim and who is the perpetrator.

South Africa's Unresolved Violence

I met artist Senzo Shabango during my internship at David Krut Projects, while he was in residency working on his upcoming show *Amandla*, which means Power in the Zulu language. While the term power suggests a heavy subject, Senzo confronts it in a witty approach that is both emotive and entertaining; therein lies the power of Senzo's work. Senzo's creative power allowed him to play freely with making humorous socio-political commentaries about the hardships of living in the city of Johannesburg.

Coming to Johannesburg to fulfill his dream to become a pilot, Senzo felt immediate overwhelming pressure from the city's hardships, "Money, experience, education, politics, law etc seem to be the sources of this power and those who have gained this autonomy seem to be able to own, control and stand for what they want whilst maintaining a privileged and comfortable lifestyle. "Having grown up in Mpumalanga Senzo was exposed to a reality that was alien to him, many things pressured him in the big city and he could see that he was not the only one. Thus, he was compelled to turn this pressure upside down; creating aesthetic concepts in order to survive it. Finally Senzo felt that he had power through his art.

Heroic Citizens

Social realism in art history glorifies the roles of the working class and the

struggle for its emancipation. The scenes typically convey a message of social or political protest edged with satire, depicting social injustice, economic hardships through unblemished pictures of life's struggles. Within this framework, Sandile Goje is a leading artist in South Africa who playfully mocks the nature of his culture during times of social change. Similarly, when looking at Senzo's work, we intuitively laugh, rather than grieve at a sad truth. "This body of work was inspired by social context, the environment I live in, color, fear, illusion, natural law, political power and pressure. These ideas have led me to explore the imagery of the "puppets masters", where the city becomes the theatre set where the drama unfolds, as the master controls his puppets." In contrast, Senzo believes that each individual should be able to use their power to improve themselves as human beings, and forget about controlling others.

Through his artworks Senzo gives tribute to the people who suffered the most from everyday pressures and were overwhelmed by the feeling of being controlled or put down. Though his full body figures appear unanimous, they come from the artist's social surrounding. Senzo's social realism comes from within the artist's everyday reality. "I took the decision to focus and deal with issues that affect me personally and not to stress myself claiming to assert universal social justice." In *Vusumuzi Mandla Kayice (2012)*, it is his father holding him and two brothers on his back. His father appears to be stepping further away and looking ahead from the city where he worked for most of his life to support the rest of his family that stayed in Mpumalanga. "People should be bigger than the city." Senzo's art is also minimalistic in the sense that he only

portrays what is important, revisiting clear symbols and icons, especially apparent in the artwork of *Endless Journey*(2012) and *Inspired By Real Life* (2012).

Power and Religion

Before I met Senzo, I heard that he was struggling with applying the color **red** to his artwork since he comes from a conservative township in South Africa, Mpumalanga, where only the pastor of the church was allowed to wear clothes in red. Every night before he went to bed, Senzo would read the bible to gain spiritual power; he finally turned the bible into his sketchbook. "Unfortunately I didn't get what I was looking for from my bible but only history, skills, hope and solutions to continue making art. However art is also a source of power and living in Johannesburg has led me to seek this power by exercising art as a source of the strength that God gave me to express what I observe in the environment I live in (The City of Gold)." When Senzo was drawing, he told me that for once he felt the urge to draw directly on the plate rather than his sketch book first; he felt the pressure that it had to be drawn directly from his imagination. Reflecting on his art, Senzo said that he always feels a relief when he finishes an artwork, as if he had contributed something and the image is already out there.

Politics of Space

Space for South Africa is not a notion or an ideology, it a living symbol for political oppression and physical appropriateness and segregation based on color. For most South African artists during apartheid and post-apartheid era, space is

interrelated to identity. Artist Sam Nhlengethwa, for example, uses space as a subject in itself; a private space setting that portrays a desire to create a world of aspirations (*My Grandmother's Kitchen in the 60's* 1998). The complexity of the political polemics involving space in South Africa renders this struggle a multi-faceted one. Thus, each artist looks at space from different angles and consequently envisions an individual approach to deal with it.

When looking at the aesthetics of Senzo's work, it becomes inevitable to associate his art with political artwork, particularly his print *The Next Meal* (2012). At a first glance, the bold contrast of the colors Black and Red as well as the clenched fist gesture remind the viewer of the symbols found in posters of the anti-apartheid and the Black Consciousness movements. Though, from a conversation with Senzo, it became clear that his intention was to reference the idea of power with the clenched fist symbol (Amandla), though not against the political system, but as a clear act of *power ownership*; "I felt like the city is pulling me down but for the first time, I feel I can hold the city in my hand. I am in control."

While Senzo's artwork is apolitical as he defers from associating with a certain political ideology, his art questions space ownership by the powerful heads that run everything, limiting space opportunities for less fortunate people. As an outsider to the city, Senzo had to constantly think about money to secure his own space, whether his studio, apartment and even societal status, realizing that at the end of the day, the money, as well as people's dignity is flushed into the loo. (*Ghost City Series*) *Next Meal* was also inspired by the poem

of Mongane Serote City Johannesburg Jo'burg City, who was a politician and was exiled in the same era as the legendary South African artist Dumile Feni.

*My hand like a starved snake rears my pockets For my thin, ever lean wallet,
While my stomach growls a friendly smile to hunger, Jo'burg City.*

*My stomach also devours coppers and papers Don't you know? Jo'burg City, I
salute you;*

Serote's words made Seno realize how demanding life in the city is, and how hectic it is for him to constantly keep thinking about getting money to secure his next meal, in contrast to the easy going life style he had in Mpumalanga. "no matter how much one made but most of the time we spent almost 70% in what I get from the city, where I come from I do spend a day without spending but I will eat and sleep in such a good space." Senzo creates space by alternating different bold colors, which inherently creates depth. While it is difficult to own a space in Jobourg, the artist challenges himself with an innovative method with linocut printmaking to carve out space.

Pressure in Jobourg/ Pressure in Printmaking

Printmaking as a fine art medium is very significant to South African art history especially that "creativity in printmaking is vested not only in the development of form and content, but in the selection and use of processes from this profusion," as Philippa Hobbs stated in her book *Printmaking in a Transforming South Africa*(1997). Printmaking became prominent in South

Africa for its economic and space-saving advantages as it does not necessarily require specialized studio-space, and can be executed anywhere and in every corner, outdoor or underground. Printmaking is a process of trial and error, which for South Africa's history of polemical politics becomes a metaphor for democratization. The idea of trial and error as a method to shape one's personality and training to build endurance and persistence is very apparent in Senzo's work.

Senzo's creativity allowed him to invent a way to print linos, with liberty to explore with colors, but with an easy and at times challenging mistakes. He cuts his lino plates in order to be able to apply different colors within the print. This freedom enables him to emphasize on a certain figure or to make depth and carve out space or design a whole room. (*Endless Journey* 2012) Senzo acknowledges the challenges as an artist to print his own editions; yet, he takes pleasure in the process and is committed to be involved in "finding beauty" even in his misprints. "The medium of printmaking Linocut and Monotypes allows me to explore the pressure of living in Johannesburg, by echoing these ideas around pressure in the medium itself.



TUNISIA'S CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC UPHEAVAL

As a scholar with a B.A in a self-design major from Connecticut College, I am interested to examine the artistic reactions and investigate its relationships to political phenomenon, specifically in Tunisia where a mass revolt ousted its dictator last year and brought down its regime. The case of the Tunisian Revolution provides a good example to establish the idea that when the state is going through a revolutionary period of identity and state reconstruction, the chaotic characteristic of the political order not only generates a power vacuum, but also leads to social conflict since difference becomes perceived as a threat to the right for personal freedom. The alarming insecurity of the state transformation is at its peak since the year 2013 marked the first political assassination¹² in the history of Tunisia as a modern state and will witness the first democratic election to determine the legitimate presidency.

¹² Chokri Belaid, a political affiliate of the left wing, was murdered in ambiguous conditions

Inefficient Art System

Note: This analysis was conducted in the year of 2012 as an independent study to pave the ground for my Honors Integrative project.

The main attributes of the Tunisian art scene are the limits that come with an elitist and constraint art circle. Major factors constitute the legacy of dictatorship, or to the fact that the only demand for art was from foreigners who strove to reminisce on their beautiful stay in Tunisia.

Since the fall of the former regime, this artistic circle are finding difficulties stretching the pre-conceived boundaries of the Tunisian aesthetics, even though new forms of art such as photography and street art have emerged as a reaction to the political revolution in addition to the development of new galleries and associations. I argue that the search for the Tunisian artistic breakthrough is hindered by the artists' state of emergency and hype about freedom of expression under the Islamist fear.

The ultimate debate is how to reconcile the liberal ideals of art with Tunisia's majority Muslim societies' traditions and beliefs. Artists, amongst all Tunisians are looking for their place in the new order, searching for an identity and trying to expand their limits. One of the major problem is that they were looking to the west as a model of modernity, freedom and high art. On the other hand, artistic expressions both within the private spaces of the galleries and in the public streets of Tunis have made a negative impact on social activism.

Likewise, "the art of the revolution" conformed to pre-conceived and

traditionally reproduced misconceptions about the use of political art forms as a tool for social change and reconciliation with the past. As I have argued in the section *On Political Art*, political art forms do not provide a source of healing from trauma and instead they have potential to become international icons that only serve the capitalistic interests of the international art market. Furthermore, not only private gallery places were involved in this political shift, but also national spaces such as the Public Library gallery, the National Center for Contemporary Art and the Museum of the City of Tunis who both have been the leading sanctuaries of the dictatorial regime.

The national contribution to the art scene should be allocated to balance resources to alleviate the inequality between the private and the public sector of the art system and give more opportunity for local artists to showcase their talent. Besides, these two spaces are located near downtown Tunis, which makes them accessible to a wider, and 'less sophisticated' public. This is a major advantage to compensating to the lack of national museums for modern or contemporary art prior to the revolution. Nevertheless, the exhibitions that were held in these spaces since their inauguration are falling under the misleading paths of past legacies, as I explained in the cases of the Chinese and South African art market. It seems to me that Ben Ali has left his ambassadors to control the fortunes of Tunisia's cultural heritage and loot it for their personnel interest. While the former Ben Ali regime was overthrown, dictatorship is still dominant in the Tunisian art world.

Public Contestation in the Form of Urban Ornamentation

The uprisings that escalated in the capital and led to the ousting of the president were embellished with a visual movement that emerged by the people's need to master the art of voicing out their dissent. The fall of the regime declared the end of censorship, which signified a remarkable phenomenon for Tunisians. To understand this phenomenon, one has to understand the Tunisian culture of being, which by itself is a unique form of social behavior.

In fact, people started to feel the change in their life and personality once they were capable of speaking freely. The revolution gave them the right to criticize and converse publicly about politics and societal problems. Tunisians finally broke away from the chains of a repressive regime that not only controlled information about their political actions, but also more importantly limited spontaneous self-expression. If you ask any Tunisian today, they will confirm that the so-called revolution has yet to prove successful in terms of socio-political change and that it merely brought about freedom or “parole libérée”.¹³

Ben Ali's pictures were the only pictures allowed, and they differentiated in sizes and were remarkably overwhelming through all city streets, plazas, not mentioning inside every store or institution. Also, slogans were only allowed for

¹³ Liberated words in French.

the regime's campaigns. As I explained in the Chinese case, the legacy of many years of political propaganda images and control has a very negative effect in the post-revolutionary political discourse. Interestingly, when Ben Ali first came to power, the inauguration of his political 'triumph' was celebrated with slogans of democratic ideals that promised a brighter future for my gullible generation. Criticism of Al Nahdha party stems from the fact that their current political campaign is also amplified with public propaganda and street marches where the children, the youth and the old are chanting the rise of a 'liberal' form of an Islamic state.

Examples of this creative energy being channeled in different ways of public contestation are ample throughout every city in Tunisia. The change in the cities' pictorial landscape was very visible during my brief visits to Tunisia from college vacation to the other. Sidi Bouzi's¹⁴ walls especially strike you with the visual vibrancy and the words shock you even more with their meaning. One of the written slogans, which I thought captures the overall feeling was "I will make the wall dirty as long as the government is dirty"¹⁵ Moreover, traces of emotional rage and frustration from years of silence were expressed on the walls of Al Kasbah¹⁶, Even though the minister demanded them to be washed out, many of us who have been directly confronted with the public's visceral form of regime contestation, will never forget the meanings and vibrancy of these words.

¹⁴ Sidi Bouzid is where the city self-immolated himself as a statement against Ben Ali's regime, and where the first revolutionary uprisings started. Sidi Bouzid is now considered the city symbol of the revolution.

¹⁵ ZAT magazine

¹⁶ Al Kasbah is home to governmental ministries and where the sit-ins took place.

Additionally, young emerging photographers documented another blistering wave of real life images of chaos, destruction and strength. In a way, the success of the Tunisian revolution stems from the power of such images to compel for activism, to remind us of victims and to awaken sentiments of solidarity. These photographs were revolutionary in that they broke the ground of public silence, documented the uprisings in the streets and spread their visual power across Tunisia and even internationally. We could argue that these same images, circulated through social media networks, and thus ignited the later uprisings in Egypt and Libya resulting in what the media calls the “Arab Spring”.

However, these photos should not be considered as Tunisia’s aesthetic revolutionary identity since their role to redefine human nature is limited to a particular time and space frame. In her book, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag asserts the value of photographs since amongst all other form of information, photos have the power to represent an idea in a small frame easy to memorize. She argues that the more shocking an image is, the more it stays with us. Photographs such in the *Degage collective*¹⁷ serve a historical record of what happened and a personal testimony that emanated from an emotional connection.

Moreover, snapshot photographs of political events have lost their revolutionary power and socio-political activism. Susan Sontag discusses the limitations of photojournalism arguing that images portraying horrors are very

¹⁷ A photography collective commissioned by Leila Souissi to document the uprisings of January 2011.

direct and its effect on the viewer becomes limited. Also, they do not leave room for ambiguity and such obscurity limits interpretation. War images report true sufferings and calamities; however, we cannot disregard the impact of the media. Bloody pictures do make the headline. “If it bleeds, it leads.”¹⁸ Once the pleasure of satisfying the shock’s effect on the viewer overruns the message’s power, the images meaning loses sensibility.

Again, it is important to emphasize that the democratization process requires societal strength and unity. Tunisia’s current political power vacuum requests an investigation of the role of culture and religion in re-building a shattered identity.

¹⁸ Sontag, p 18

Moments of Freedom Art Exhibition

The scholarship of museum studies testifies the museum's position of authority in the art world, dictating the status of fine art and educating a greater public about the dominion of visual culture as cultural and historical heritage. Moreover, the appearance of the modern art gallery since the end of the 19th century gave birth to our perception of art as commodity and an indicator of elitest material wealth. While both museums and galleries are pivotal actors in the cycle of the art world, which drives the production and consumption of artistic growth, they have increasingly become detrimental to the core values of art and stained its pure revelation of truth and beauty.

Moments of Freedom: Revolutionary Art from China, South-Africa and Tunisia intends to transcend our perception of history as something that already happened and as only worthy of occasional remembrance. Instead, it brings the past to the forefront of the present, to expose the origin of the deceiving repetitive cycle of narration, to contain the process of eternal progress, and to make the present the ground zero for re-construction, for being and becoming.

Thomas Docherty, in his book *Aesthetic Democracy* (2006), argues that we have to recognize culture not as a constant state of affairs but rather as an event that sees its root in aesthetics and establishes a potential for transformation of the self from the constant ordinary to an extraordinary self. Similarly, he

conceives democracy as the condition of 'becoming' democratic, which is rooted in the cultural event. From this perspective, *Moments of Freedom* exhibition was curated to represent the ideals of an 'Aesthetic Democracy'.

In light of Docherty's definition of an 'Aesthetic Democracy', the cultural event is that moment in our relations, in our perceptions or in the aesthetic, in which we see the possibility or potential for freedom; and the location for that, most often, is in what we call art: literature, poetry, painting, music, dance, sculpture. A democracy that is intent on establishing and furthering the freedom of subjects-subjects who know themselves always to be conditioned by the alterity to which art open them-is the most fundamental form of democracy that we might have.¹⁹

Political Theory scholar Roberto Dahl defines ideal Democracy as a 'polyarchy'²⁰, which is a regime that has been substantially popularized and liberalized, where the political system is highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation. *Moments of Freedom* exhibition parallels these two attributes by providing an accessible and open space for public contestation, as well as offering an equal opportunity of representation, exempt from segregation and eliticism. In the field of exhibition curatorship, it is important to consider these factors in order to uphold the democratic ideals of equal and just representation, thus minimizing the threat of controversy and authoritative critique by allowing access to a wide and diversified public given that the

¹⁹ (Docherty, Preface)

²⁰ Dahl (1971)

exhibition is free of charge and available for view to the public as long as the library is open.

More importantly, the prominence of the exhibition design resides in the advantage of having the art divided in multiple locations to add the necessary ingredients of public interaction and surprise to the melting pot of a provocative and effective visual display of information. *Moments of Freedom: Revolutionary Art from China, South-Africa and Tunisia* exhibition brings together a rich mosaic of historical material, many of which have never been shown together, to examine, analyze and expose the most compelling revolutions of the 20th and 21st century.

Accompanied by more than 50 important artworks including photography, paintings and rare propaganda posters as an overview of the distinctive pictorial responses to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, South Africa's apartheid, and the Tunisian revolution that sparked the Arab Spring in 2011, this exhibition includes the exceptional works of internationally acclaimed artists such as William Kentridge, Senzo Shabangu, Diane Victor, Zhang Hongtu, Lotfi Kraiem, Rajaa Ghari, and Deborah Bell. In addition, the exhibition will feature the works of a new generation of Tunisian photographers such as Wassim Grimen, Omar Sfayhi and Youssef Ben Ammar.

Photography from Tunisia exhibition was commissioned specifically to capture the revolutionary transformation of the revolutionary state. Its display in the center of the library space is an important factor for cultural exchange,

mutual understanding and cooperation. This is a significant initiative that provides a rare opportunity for young artist to expose their work internationally, which ultimately serves to promote artistic production and give moral and material encouragement for the education of the visual arts.


The different artistic mediums used by the participating artists add to the richness and enhance the public's perception of the visual information visual art including painting, mixed media, photography, etching, drypoint and linocut prints, as well as original propaganda posters from the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). The exhibition is a living testimony that shows how revolutionary visual language in relations to political turmoil and social injustices contribute to the transformation of the perception of national identity, becoming a social instrument in defining or questioning the limits of ideological power.

At the end, *Moments of Freedom* aims to deconstruct the history of global injustices, question the power of ideology, challenge the authority of the image, and promote freedom of expression. The unintentional qualities that emerge from this conscious collage (i.e exhibition design) are a metaphor for the necessary spontaneous, whether desirable or undesirable accidents that are the most integral fuel for the process of national change, and regime transformation.

Curatorial Statement:

1- The exhibition materials, photos of display, titles and information about the artworks, rare propaganda, and photography, will be archived in the Connecticut College database.

2-The Tunisian artworks exhibited are all for sale. As the curator of the exhibition, I have made it my righteous duty to sell the artwork to help the artists finance their cost of living. Granted I succeed, I will use the commission fee as a stipend to do more scholarly and on the ground research as a follow up of this essay.



**MOMENTS OF
FREEDOM**
REVOLUTIONARY
ART FROM CHINA,
SOUTH AFRICA
& TUNISIA

PANEL DISCUSSION /
EXHIBITION OPENING

**APRIL 4, 2013
AT 4:15 PM**

CHARLES CHU ROOM

WITH PANELISTS

**STEVEN DUBIN
ALEX HYBEL
ZHANG HONGTU
RAJAA GHARBI
& YIBING HUANG**

PHOTO BY WASSIM GRIMEN

IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF THE TUNISIAN REVOLUTION

LOOKING BEYOND THE CANON

One of the biggest absurdities of human existence is the perpetual cycle of the dehumanizing acts of violence and mass murder. The previous chapters serve to establish some sense on why some historical tragedies are bound to happen again and again. To ensure the collective positive progress of our humanity, we have to learn from our mistakes of the past, in order to prevent them from happening in the future. Although, this essay is not particularly meant for providing quick solutions, it does highlight the critical significance of forms of representation, particularly visual ones.

In order to start this conversation about the type of Revolutionary Art that should be considered for research about the complexity of human nature, I will introduce the pioneering research of Thomas Docherty, *Aesthetic Democracy*, in which he argues that the ideals of democracy are only possible of becoming reality, when realizing that aesthetics (cultural event) as the potential of being. My questions have to do with the meaning of altering the self, and of the extend of its possibility without losing the self. And whether this experience of altering the self is an individual or a social phenomenon.

When a nation is in a period of transformation in consequence to a political revolution- as in the case of Tunisia- the ultimate challenge is to obtain emancipation from the legacy of the previous regime, and reconcile the trauma of its violence-as in the cases of Apartheid and the Cultural Revolution-, to represent 'the altered being'. He states, "Aesthetic democracy, then, is based

upon the potentiality of democracy. Further, it is linked to the metaphysics of a 'going beyond' (which I have characterized here as beyond of Europe)."

²¹Docherty characterizes democracy as a visionary event. He argues that genuine Democracy "requires an act of representation whose function is not to identify the self but to alter it; and such a representation, therefore, is akin to that of characterization of the postmodern as a moment when representation becomes a predicament." This argument is so significant because it gives considerable insight to facilitating the neo-colonial countries during their period of transition.

Docherty concludes his book by affirming that history will cease its legacy and not repeat itself, when it is shared through the experience of altering the self. "Aesthetics makes possible history as the experience of altering the self; and it is democratic precisely to the extent that such history can never be mine or mine alone, for an altered self, knows no I."²² A revolution implies a radical regime change, which Docherty defines as history. By saying, 'aesthetics makes possible history as the experience of altering the self; he is implying that a revolution is possible when aesthetics (cultural event) takes place by a mechanism of 'altering the self'. Again, the question of the 'self' is challenging.

In the next chapter sections, I will elaborate on the artistic expression of two Tunisian artists, Rajaa Gharbi and Lotfi Kraiem, whose art epitomize the aesthetic act of self-alienation to achieve enlightenment by aligning truth with the absence of ideological reasoning.

²¹ Docherty, p161

²² Docherty, p160

The Hypocrisy of Resistance: Beauty, Freedom, Truth

I.

An artist, a powerful woman and a mother, Rajaa Gharbi's artistic experience and creations are as diverse as her enthusiasm about life and her activism. The importance of her artwork is not only confined to its stylistic and visual breakthrough, but also for its valuable contribution to an alternative education about the arts, especially in the post-revolutionary Tunisia.

Rajaa Gharbi is an accomplished Tunisian-American multi-media, and multi-disciplinary artist. She is a poet, painter, filmmaker and a journalist researcher. Born and raised in El Bacha neighborhood located in Tunis' old medina, she later moved to the United States passing by Morocco in 1977 where her artistic and academic career flourished and found recognizable appreciation. Today, her artistic ambitions to show a "distinctive" kind of art take her back to the homeland Tunisia. From an infant stage, she started to mimic in images her admiration and influence of her family's artistic senses. She wholesomely combined her mother's passion for designing textiles and her father's genius and inheritance of the family's tradition of story telling for the Tunisian Beylical royalty.

She first painted when she was six years old, an Amazigh fabric inspired by the colors and textures of Berber traditional cloth. As a teenager, her everyday walk from her house to the library passing by the Zitouna Mosque enabled her to absorb with admiration and intrigue the medina's symbols and grandeur of Islamic architecture. The artist's African origin, Arabic heritage, Francophone influence as well as the American living experience and interactions add to her

uniquely rich psyche and inherently tolerant personality. This spontaneously shows in her artwork. Her paintings are colorfully rich, boldly vibrant and the perplex weaving of her brushstroke layers are intricately intimate, which is symbolic of her timidly playful soul.

When asked how she herself confronted the white canvas, she insisted that while she mastered the art of painting and its rules, she painted only when in need to experiment with her thoughts and explore fresh possibilities.

“The artist is the creator of beautiful things,” such declared Oscar wild. Gharbi’s paintings are visually beautiful and at times appear childish when we first see them. Yet, this confrontation is embedded with intrigue and is emotive because it leaves us in awe and appalls us with a sense of intimidation. As a viewer, I was overwhelmed by my own ‘fault’ of experiencing a visual romance journey, but at the same time I felt a necessity to become responsible as the owner of such beauty. What to do? Now I am engaged to uncover what lies underneath? It is hard not to read Gharbi’s paintings as a kind of poetry of life, and not to see her colors dancing to the music of life.

Her artwork is reminiscent of Paul Klee’s delicate sensibility and Kandinsky’s bold color contrasts, as well as Georgia O’keefee’s feminine delicacy. Yet, she exclusively introduces Arabic calligraphy to assure this eternal interconnectedness of nature to knowledge. Her letters are transformed into sometimes, surreally unusual forms, and other times feminine shapes. She told

me in an interview, “My use of calligraphy is an invitation to move beyond the traditional use of language.”²³

Excerpt from the artist’s poetry, **The Present is Always in the Past Tense (2003)**

I am neither you
nor am I me
for I know
the word is
only one measure
of presence

I am neither you
nor am I me
for I know
the word is
only one measure
of presence

The Artist’s Ideology as a Female Tunisian Artist

Rajaa Gharbi believes that ultimately we have to reconnect with our natural senses and think of the human psyche as a utility to become more aware of equality on earth. Hence, she feels that her Art contributes to the humane healing, which inherently heals the universe around us “The environment feeds and nurtures us and we need to give back to it. We live on this earth. Nature is so

²³ Interview with the artist. May 2012

monumental; it is a miracle beyond our means. I feel I need to contribute into healing it, and give back to mother nature,” explains the artist.

The painter as a poet is exuberant with words. Similar to her poetry, she breathes life into new meanings in her canvas. Were words aborted from her womb? Is she the mother of creativity? Or is she the woman of all sorrows? Gharbi’s internal feelings as a woman are translated implicitly into her paintings woven through the twisting and turning of her lines and colors that reminisce the geometrics of a woman’s body. However, the artist denounces the circulating photos on social media networks of naked women in provocative poses arguing that this undermines the totality of life that a woman is capable of. “In the art world, to use woman’s nudity as a metaphor, and as a symbol of women’s sexual dignity is dishonest. It is a pattern of representation that is normative, it limits the true freedom of a woman’s body, which is definitely not a sex body or a decorative image.”²⁴ Rajaa Gharbi points to a great danger that falls from such practice and which in her opinion makes conservative people follow extremism. Even though she says we need art more than before, there has been utilitarian exploitative provocation by some artists. She says, “Some people would like to see Tunisia travel back centuries ago where men exploit women, as well as children and nature even more than we are now, in a place where the rule of law is violent. We have to represent intelligently, otherwise we will give Salafists more gas for their engines.”²⁵

²⁴ Interview with the artist. May 2012

²⁵ Interview with the artist. May 2012

Gharbi's artworks while appearing abstract and beautiful on the surface, it is embedded with metaphors expressing the artist's feelings and visions. It is multi-layered with many interpretations. If you look at architecture today, it is a fallacious representation. It is how we live it spatially. A woman's body is also a lived experience. Her painting is embedded with revolutionary symbols and socio-political meanings distinctive of the Tunisian situation. The artist created a bridge to launch her ideas and project her emotions as if she foresaw the Tunisian youth rising and the revolution for freedom happening.

II.

Lotfi Kraiem is a Tunisian self-taught painter, who has been living in Washington, DC for more than fifteen years. His studio is situated in front of the Tunisian embassy. On January 14th, 2011, the day that changed every Tunisian's life since it marked the historical fall of Ben Ali's regime following a national uprising, I met Lotfi in front of the embassy when I went to protest. His work is especially valuable because it introduces a new movement for absolute freedom in the Tunisian cultural scene. At a critical time in the revolutionary Tunisian history when art is much needed to reconcile societal divisions erupted by the post-dictatorship freedom of expression, the art scene-very amateur- is hungry for visionary artistic expression to guide the society to identity re-definition.

Lotfi was born in April 1st, 1966 in Tunis, but he is originally from Kerkennah, a small island. His father was very renowned music composer and art promoter, however made sure Lotfi followed a career in the sciences. Lotfi's

mother is *Jewish* and he is very much influenced by the Jewish liturgy, while concerned with Tunisian societal Muslim traditions. His life story is quite peculiar and worth reporting. Even though he decided to live outside Tunisia, he is probably one of the most socio-politically engaged thinkers we have today.

The artist's idiosyncratic movement in painting embarks him in complete liberty complemented with his unusual talent in immersing oneself in a transcending state to form an unforeseen image. His use of colors as well as brush stroke movements are impulsive since his body and mind are tuned in harmony elevating him to form subconscious shapes and subjects that are related to an extra-ordinary world. Once he makes the discovery and reencounter of his subjects, he immediately comprehends the story. His painting act is an act of self-sacrifice to reach a state of enlightenment marked by reasoning process that is absolutely detached from any ideas. In this way, the material self disappears and allows authority to the spiritual self. Ranciere explains, "For critical art is not so much a type of art that reveals the forms and contradictions of domination as it is an art that questions its own limits and powers, that refuses to anticipate its own effects."²⁶ This is why this kind of aesthetic is revolutionary, because it documents a radical act of rebellion as a predicament of beauty.

Rapid brushstrokes harmonized with sublime use of color are his getaway to comfortably connecting the body movement and the brain activity to indulge in an experience reminiscent to dreaming. His paintings are mystically beautiful emanating peaceful light and liberty striking the viewer with immediate emotiveness. However, in his art creation process, visual beauty is not the goal, it

²⁶ Ranciere, p 56

radiates naturally as his state of being goes through a happy zone. Beauty is not relevant in the process of art making. Beauty becomes the visual piety that reveals the truth behind the image, the story leading to a miraculous end. The creator is someone who is completely liberated from outside socio-political pressure, even though he is constantly engaged in it in his everyday life.

Since I started indulging myself in the contemporary art scene, I became hunted with the idea of how an artwork becomes an artwork applauded in the art world? It is a way for me to reconnect with myself within a brutal world where people are constantly alienated. As an amateur art historian and critic, I spontaneously connect with images that strike a shock of emotions in me, that intrigue my curiosity in a way that makes me rethink who I am. That is how to value an artwork, when that confrontation happens, I can almost feel the artist himself. And I could tell which artist is emancipated from the rest of the world. I find beauty in that.

Therefore, Lotfi Kraiem's work for instance, is a solution to this problem – only 'Outsider Art' is immune to the influences of culture, immune to being absorbed and assimilated, because the artists themselves were not willing or able to be assimilated. Free spirited do not create for public consumption, thus inherently attaching high art value to their art creations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study is an attempt to narrate an insider's understanding of the Tunisian revolution through a global comparison from the perspective of big history. Some of the limitations were the constraint of time to elaborate on many of the ideas and questions raised throughout the analysis. Moreover, ideally, the forthcoming approach for a comparative analysis is to test hypothesis about the relationship between art and politics. However, such study needs a closer investigation of all the existent theoretical models, as well as extensive on the ground surveys and interviews conducted in all these three countries, China, South Africa and Tunisia.

The subject of art and politics has created countless books, symposia, exhibitions, and activist projects. This exaltation in academic literature has intricately introduced the critical power of images in generating fantasies, manipulating information, dictating and propagating the rule of ethics across societies. Moreover, the wave of contentious uprisings, social movements, and revolutions demonstrated that various forms of artistic expressions blossom in consequence of socio-political turmoil and a change in regime. When presented with the thought that both arts and politics are related in the context of shaping the mechanisms of societal change, we tend to be reluctant to dig deeper, often simply denying the possibility of any kind of relationship or rendering it insignificant.

Visual art has the power of overcoming the limits of languages and cultures and thus can travel across continents. In fact, images, even beyond fantasies and illusions, can find their solitude, their essence, in a crossword

across worlds. Revolutions that spur from local motives and reactions generate a movement of images that could find their echoes in other societies. With the opening of the political system during the period of social transformation, we have to regulate wisely whether the role of art occupies the political opportunity structure, or engage in discovering the boundaries of freedom of expression.

Tunisia's case is especially important in the contemporary international affairs both for its political impact on the Middle East region and its cultural vibrancy. If the current revolution fails to fulfill the Tunisian people's demands for freedom, plurality and dignity, not only the Middle East region will suffer worse repression from theocrats, but also the power balance of the international arena would be at stake.

A revolution is a conscious act. It permits the unthinkable to be thought, the unimaginable to be imagined, and the unspoken to be shouted out loud." Albie Sachs²⁷

²⁷ Albie Sachs, First draft of Murals of a Revolution, sent with letter to Judy Seidman. Medu in 1982 JS papers, p.1

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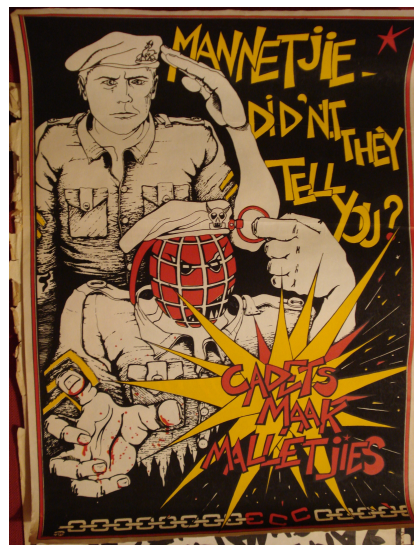
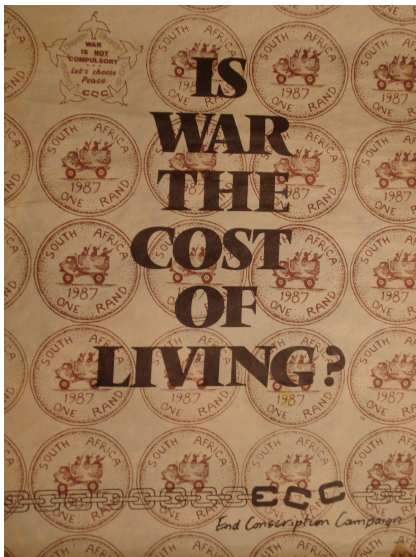
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Rare Posters From End the Conscription Campaign (ECC)

It was assumed that whites would not support the anti-apartheid movement. All white males were conscripted into the South African Defense Force (SADF). They served to fight the liberation movements on the borders of South Africa, and after 1975 increasingly across the borders within the liberated front-line states. In late 1983, the ECC came into being, formed by a number of organizations.



Senzo Njabulo Shabangu

1.



William Kentridge

2.



Deborah Bell

3.



Diane Victor

4.



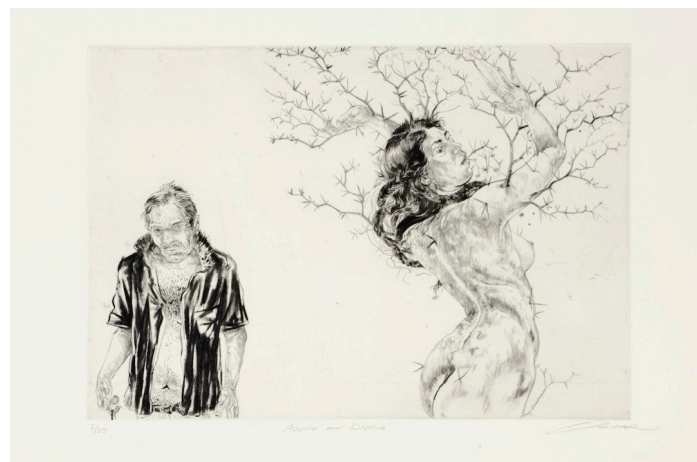
5.



6.



7.

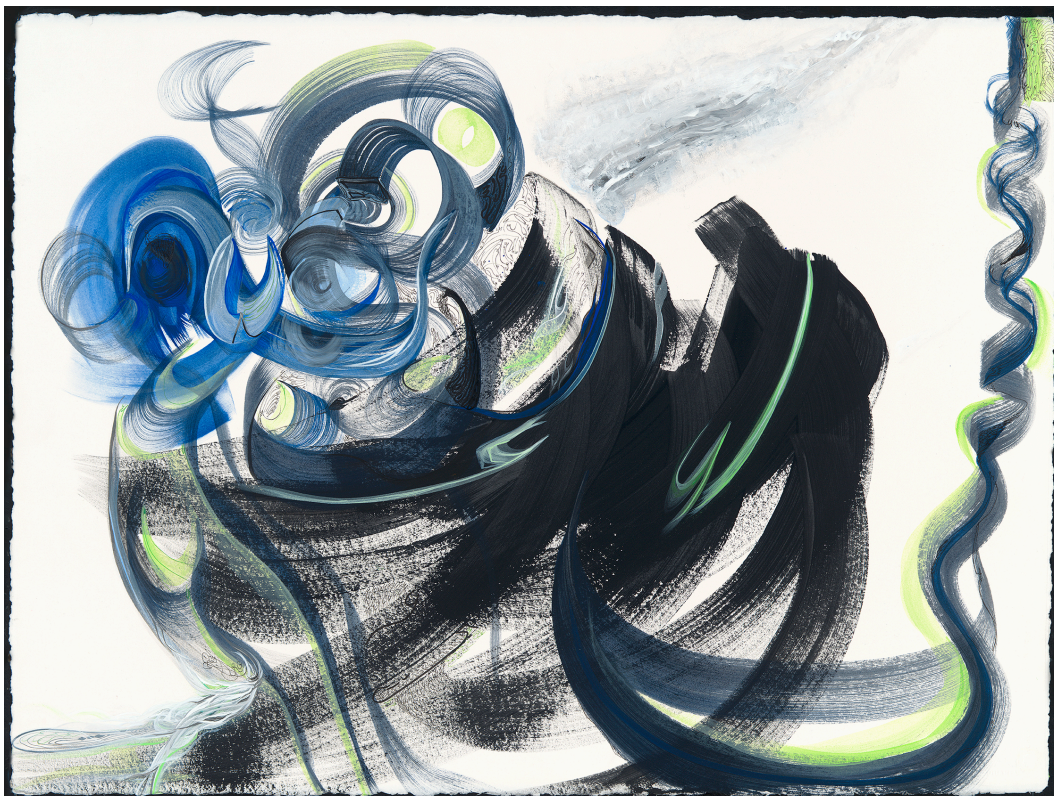


8.



Rajaa Gharbi

9.



10.



11.



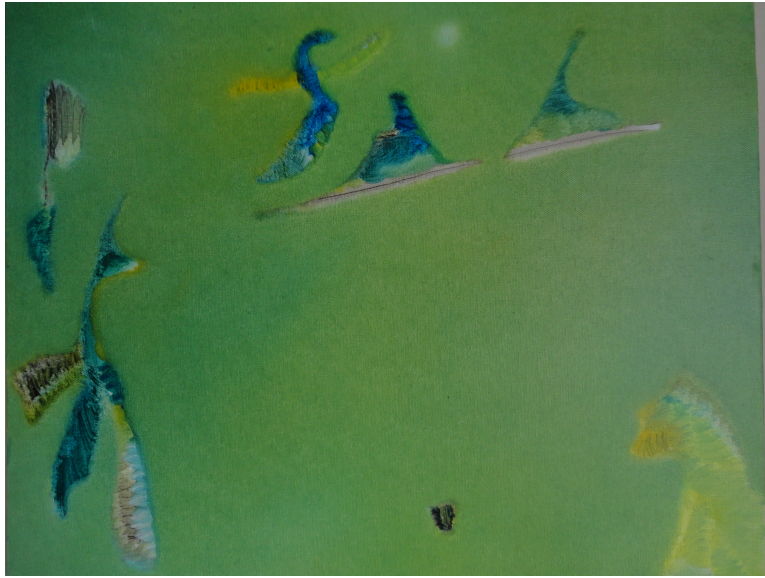
Cedric Nunn

12.



Lotfi Kraiem

13.



14.



Zhang Hongtu

15.



16. 17. 18. 19

20.

Images from Tunisia's Revolutionary State After the Fall of Ben Ali's Dictatorial Regime (2011-2013)

These selected photographs were solicited, amongst others, for this exhibition, and were shot by Tunisian photographers Omar Sfayhi, Wassim Grimen, and Youssef Ben Ammar to document the socio-political transformation.







VIEW OF EXHIBITION DESIGN







IMAGES INDEX

1.

Title	Next Meal
Artist	Senzo Shabangu
Year	2012
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Linocut
Edition Size; Number	20; 3/20

2.

Title	<i>L'Inesorabile Avanzata: Massacre of the Innocents</i>
Artist	William Kentridge
Year	2007
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut
Media & Techniques	Chine Collé, Drypoint, Spitbite Aquatint
Edition Size; Number	50; 32/50

3.

Title	Harmonia I
Artist	Deborah Bell
Year	2010
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Spitbite aquatint and point with chine collé
Edition Size; Number	20; 12/20

4. Birth of a Nation Series (2009), Diane Victor**5.**

Title	Birth of a Nation: Monotaur
Artist	Diane Victor
Year	2009
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Chine Collé, Drypoint, <u>Spitbite Aquatint</u>
Edition Size	20; 24/30

6.

Title	Birth Of a Nation: The Rape of Africa
Artist	Diane Victor
Year	2009
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Drypoint
Edition Size; Number	20; 24/30

7.

Title	Birth Of a Nation: Apollo and Daphne
Artist	Diane Victor
Year	2009
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Drypoint
Edition Size; Number	20; 24/30

8.

Title	Birth Of a Nation: Leda and the White Backed Vulture
Artist	Diane Victor
Year	2009
Artwork Category	Editions & Multiples published by David Krut Projects; NYC
Media & Techniques	Drypoint
Edition Size; Number	20; 24/30

9.

Title	Hidden Friends II
Artist	Rajaa Gharbi
Year	2013
Size	30".4/8x22".6/8
Media & Techniques	Acrylic on paper
Price	\$2.600

10.

Title	<i>The Wedding of Deborah Eksteen and Noel Norris</i>
Artist	Cedric Nunn
Year	2001
Size	20x16 inches
Media & Techniques	Silver and gelatin print
Edition Size; Number	20; 1/20
Courtesy Of	David Krut Projects, NY

11.

Title	Circus and the Steady Dancer.
Artist	Rajaa Gharbi
Year	2012-13
Size	48"x24"
Media & Techniques	Acrylic mounted on canvas
Price	\$4.400

12.

Title	Eye in the Silent Diacritic
Artist	Rajaa Gharbi
Year	2012-13
Size	48"x24"
Media & Techniques	Acrylic on paper
Price	\$1200

13.

Title	Message
Artist	Lotfi Kraiem
Year	2011
Media & Techniques	Oil on Canvas
Price	\$1200

14.

Title	Untitled
Artist	Lotfi Kraiem
Year	2011
Media & Techniques	Oil on canvas
Price	\$1300

15.

Title	Long Live Chairman Mao Series; Quaker Oats Mao
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1987
Media & Techniques	Iron and Acrylic on Wood
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu

16.

Title	Mao Buttons
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1992
Media & Techniques	Iron and Acrylic on Wood
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu

17.

Title	Mao Fur
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1992
Media & Techniques	Fur and Acrylic on Wood
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu

18.

Title	Mao Shoelace
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1992
Media & Techniques	Leather, Shoelace on Wood
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu

19.

Title	Mao Zipper
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1992
Media & Techniques	Leather, Zipper and Acrylic on Wood
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu

20.

Title	The Last Banquet
Artist	Zhang Hongtu
Year	1989
Media & Techniques	Digital print of the original painting
Courtesy Of	Zhang Hongtu